

## Contributions

### THE COVERING FOR WOMEN

D. C. MOOMAW

Having received a few copies of the BRETHREN EVANGELIST, and seeing in issue for Feb. 23 an article by D. C. Moomaw in which he states that the Corinthian women were accustomed to cutting off their hair. Will he be so kind as to inform the readers of the EVANGELIST who told him that the Corinthian women were accustomed to cutting off their hair? He further insinuates the covering which the women were required to wear was the hair. Let us see. "For if a woman be not covered let her also be shorn." 1 Cor. 16:6. If Paul meant the hair, this scripture can be correctly rendered as follows: "For if a woman have no hair on her head let her also be shorn." Will D. C. Moomaw or some of his colleagues tell us how this could be done? Please give this a place in the EVANGELIST, with all the explanatory comments you can append, and send a copy containing it to

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### REPLY.

The foregoing very interesting letter, addressed to the Brethren Publication Board, was sent to me by the Board and I herewith hand to the EVANGELIST my response. I cannot discover whether the writer of the letter is seeking information on the subject of the mysterious covering for women's heads, for his spiritual edification or otherwise; but I will give him what information I can and he can use it as it will best please him.

His first question is "who told him (D. C. Moomaw) that the Corinthian women were accustomed to cutting off their hair." The person who first gave out information on this subject and from whom I received it indirectly, that is, second handed, was known in his day, A. D. 60, by the name of Paul. This man was a noted traveler, preacher, letter writer, philosopher, theologian, socialist, patriot, diplomat, an all-round man, up-to-date, honest, heroic, chivalrous, and so on to the end of the list, making in the aggregate one of the most superb men that God ever made. I am thus explicit in mentioning the characteristics of my author that our inquisitive friend may be induced to accept the testimony. His people, I believe, accept the distinguished witness as competent in most things where they do not disagree with the decisions, the eyes and noses of his Annual Meeting.

This illustrious man wrote a letter to the Christians at Corinth, a city noted for the shamelessness of its women. To call a woman a "Corinthian" now would have the same effect on her, if she were intelligent, as to call her a "Magdalene." From verse 6 of the eleventh chapter of that letter we obtain specific information that those shameless women were accustomed to clip or shave off their hair. If our friend will just look between the lines he can read it while he

runs. There is a great amount of valuable information found by reading between the lines and our querist would increase his stock greatly by indulging in the practice. A man once offered \$500 for the chapter and verse which records apostolic teaching and practice of feet-washing. He could have found it between the lines of verse 10, chapter five of 1st Timothy, for a penny. Now the natural and logical conclusion is that some of those women were converted to the doctrines of Christ and they still continued to appear in public without the natural badge of purity. We see from verse 1, chapter five of 1 Cor. that those Christians did not possess a very exalted conception of moral cleanliness. The same state of things is graphically portrayed in verse 11 of the same chapter. To correct the fatal tendency of such a course Paul set forth with vivid clearness the holy office of woman's glorious covering or protection from the taint of shame; her beautifully long hair! What a travesty on logic or reason or common sense would a plea for a tiny lace or muslin cap appear as an agency to correct such a damning habit. Let it be comprehended that this covering was not considered as a means to simply enclose or envelop the head, but rather as an unmistakable token of her purity to shield her from insults or suggestive remarks or gestures that lewd men would offer to one who appeared in public otherwise.

Our inquiring friend again says "he further insinuates that the covering which the woman was required to wear was the hair." Now if I merely "insinuated" such a sentiment I ask pardon of everybody and Paul especially. I meant to assert it *unequivocally*, if possible, as specific as Paul did in verse 15. In view of all the facts herein before stated and in the full glare of the light of the 15th verse can any person doubt the exactness of the thing with which Paul taught those women to cover their heads: "For her hair is given her for a covering." If our friend will read that chapter with that clause in view he will see nothing but her glorious hair, but if he reads it in the light of editor Moore's interpretation, he will see nothing but a white cap. He wants to see a harmony between the 15th verse and the 6th verse. People who do not want to believe a specific statement of inspiration are always troubled with imaginary contradictions. This is a common weapon of all disbelievers whether in part or entire. Paul explains it to be the hair in verse 15. Our friend says it is not true, but it means a white cap and he proves it by the A. M. Peter refers to such men as our querist in 2nd letter 3:16 as follows: "Our Bro. Paul has written some things hard to be understood which the unlearned wrest to their own destruc-

tion." When the church to which our friend is supposed to belong wrests verse 15 of the eleventh chapter of 1 Cor. to mean a white cap and nothing else and makes that interpretation a condition of salvation will he tell me how near to destruction it will take its members?

I will submit the following amplification of the idea of Paul in verse 6 for our friend's edification: "For if the woman will not wear her hair to protect her from shameless associates don't forbid her to cut it off: let her bear the full consequences of her folly, but, when she realizes the full weight of the shame of her act, let her suffer her hair to grow long for God gave her long hair to cover or protect her from such shame." Is not this rendering more logical and scriptural than to say a white cap was the only thing that God intended for a covering?

There is one point I want to impress on the mind of our querist, if such a thing is possible. The reference in this chapter to the covering is only in the singular number. The A. M. of the church of which our brother is supposed to be a member meets once a year for the specific purpose of making laws or rules for its people, or as the astute editor of the G. M. styles it, to interpret the scriptures. Their interpretation of 1 Cor. 18:1-15 makes it necessary for their women to wear three coverings, to wit: the hair that God gave her, the bonnet or hat as she happens to be located geographically, that comfort and custom demands, and the white cap that the A. M. commands and their requirement of these three coverings is so pre-emptory that she is taught to believe she will go to hell if she don't wear them. Of course these explanations and comments will not satisfy or convince our querist. His people are not accustomed to recognizing Progressives as competent teachers, and as a rule they do not believe or practice a doctrine, however plainly it is taught in the scriptures, until it is countersigned by their A. M. As an evidence of the truth of this statement I call to witness the fact that, although it is said specifically in Mark 14:22, "that as they did eat he took bread," etc., his people interject the holy kiss between the supper and the communion, thus breaking the continuity of the ordinances as Christ delivered them and they cannot adopt the plain New Testament teaching until the A. M. gives permission. The western district of Pennsylvania got upon its knees before the last A. M. and begged for the privilege to conform to God's Word in that thing but their humble petition was rejected.

Our friend may say he cannot understand Paul to mean the hair, and noth-